

## Car Hire in France

### **Introduction**

Hiring a car in France is no different to any other parts of the world but here are some helpful do's and don'ts and good practice that may help reduce cost at a later date.

### **Recommended comparison sites**

Car hire throughout the world has huge variations in the price of not just the car itself, but also the 'extras' that the company will try to sell.

Below are a few comparison sites (there are of course many more) but do look very carefully beyond just the initial hire price.

[www.holidayautos.com](http://www.holidayautos.com)

[www.rentalcars.com](http://www.rentalcars.com)

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**Fuel policy** - Try to use a company that will offer **full tank to full tank**, as some companies will make you prepay for a full tank which could mean you end up paying for fuel that you don't use.

**Insurance** - This is potentially a huge increase to the advertised cost as many companies will pressurise you to take on additional insurance once you are at the desk. Doing this might reduce the deposit you pay but in general buying **top up insurance** before you get to the desk will be cheaper.

You can get **top up insurance** through independent car excess sites such as

<https://www.insurance4carhire.com> or book through the comparison sites at the time of making a reservation.

With most of the prepaid additional insurance excess policies, if there is an incident the car hire company will charge you and you will need to claim that back from the policy. However, if you do take the more expensive option when you hire the car at the desk, then they will cover it immediately.

### **Per kilometre charge v unlimited kilometres**

As a general rule try to get **unlimited** kilometres included in your hire, especially if you intend to travel longer distances. However, if you are not planning to travel much beyond getting to the Gathering and back, it might be cheaper to chose the **per kilometre** charge.

### **Companies to avoid**

- Cheaper may not be best - look at reviews of car hire companies, as sometimes the really cheap ones will try to get their money out of you by claiming all sorts of damages.
- Check if the car hire company is actually at the airport or if you need to be transferred to another place (after a long journey you might want to avoid the latter.)
- **One to avoid - Goldcar** - <https://www.goldcar.es/en/>

### **French/Spanish tolls**

If you are travelling from one of the major airports i.e. Bordeaux (France) or Bilbao (Spain), the best way to get to the Gathering venue will be via the main toll roads. They will accept most credit or debit cards and give you change if you have euros.

E.g. Bordeaux to the Gathering venue in Hossegor, costs around €20, and from Bilbao about €25. (The more scenic routes via non-toll roads can add considerable time to your journey.)

**Important note** - If you are hiring a car in Spain, make sure that you are **allowed to take it to France** and that it will be **covered by insurance there** - check the small print. (There may be a small charge per day to do this.)

### **Satellite Navigation**

- The more expensive cars may come with built-in Sat Nav, and most companies will give you the opportunity to hire these.
- However, Google maps are pretty good if you have data or you can preload the route off-line  
The app **maps.me** is free and uses GPS signals so it can work without using any data.

**Note** load your maps with wifi, then use without wifi.

### **Collection and return of the hire car** – to avoid nasty shocks

- The collection and return are really important, as unless you spot damage when you collect the car and it is marked on the paperwork, the company may try to charge you for it when you return the vehicle. If you are being shown to your car, look very carefully to see if there is damage not marked on the paperwork and point it out to the car hire representative. If you are collecting or returning the vehicle in the dark try to do the check in or check out under the lights or use a torch.
- Take pictures of the car when collecting it and likewise dropping off. In particular if there is nobody to check the car back in on your return, take pictures of each of the four sides so that you have a time record of when you returned it.

### **Conclusion**

If you would like to read more, the link below takes you to a very useful article in a UK newspaper

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/advice/cheap-holiday-car-hire-guide-saving-money/>

Enjoy the experience - **Phil Williams and the event organising team**